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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 08/26/2003

On 08/21/2003, Ali Mehdi Al-Timimi, born on [REDACTED] ; in Washington, D.C., Social Security Account Number [REDACTED], was interviewed at the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) for the Eastern District of Virginia (EDVA) in Alexandria, Virginia. Present during the interview were Al-Timimi's attorneys Martin McMahon and Chris Smith. In addition to the interviewing agents, also present from the government were Assistant United States Attorneys Grodon Kromberg and David Laufman, Department of Justice Trial Attorney John Gibbs, Chief of the EDVA Criminal Division Justin Williams, and Counsel to the U.S. Attorney Brian Miller. After being advised of the identities of the interviewing agents and the nature of the interview, Timimi provided the following information:

Al-Timimi (hereinafter Timimi) advised that he is convinced that the government is after the wrong man. Timimi claims to have done more than any other English speaking Muslim lecturer to speak against terrorism. Timimi cited his 1993 lecture at the Purdue University as an example of his stance on terrorism. Timimi's speech at Purdue has been widely disseminated. Timimi feels that it was as a result of this speech at Purdue, that agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the United States Secret Service (USSS) pitched him to become their informant in 1994. Timimi turned down the recruitment pitch because he associated with "non-violent circles" and thus would not be in a position to provide useful information.

Timimi advised that he is a popular speaker on Islamic topics. Copies of Timimi's tapes have been distributed and sold all over the world. Timimi advised that during his lectures, he has consistently tried to convince his listeners that participation in jihad is not the appropriate course of action. Timimi cited an example of when he was in Singapore in 1999 and he was introduced telephonically to an individual in Indonesia (Timimi could not remember his name) who wanted to participate in jihad. Over the course of three days, Timimi spoke to this individual from Indonesia and tried to talk him out of his plans for jihad. Timimi later came to learn that due to his conversations with this

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Indonesian individual, JAAFER TALIB, a representative of LASKAR JIHAD in Indonesia, characterized Timimi as a deviant. TALIB discouraged people from sitting with Timimi. Timimi was not aware that HAMMAD ABDUR-RAHEEM, a former student of Timimi at the Dar al Arqam, was associated with Laskar Jihad in Indonesia. Timimi also did not recall during his trip to Singapore, recommending that someone speak to SABRI BENKAHLA. Timimi does not recall writing a letter of introduction to BENKAHLA for anyone that he met during his trip to Singapore.

Timimi recalled another example of when he convinced a listener not to participate in Jihad. In 2001 Timimi lectured at a conference in Leicester, England. During that conference, Timimi discussed the concept of globalization. Timimi advised that although globalization is detrimental to the Muslim world and the Muslim cultural identity, it also has some benefits, such as technology. During the conference, Timimi came to know a young man who asserted that there was no other way to combat globalization than by jihad. Timimi said that he spent the next three weeks convincing this man that jihad was not in his best interest.

Timimi was presented with four-pages, consisting primarily of Arabic text, downloaded from the following web-site: <http://www.alfir.com/showthread.php...3f362812e5f309d4d&threadid=130909>. Timimi recognized the web-site and advised that the comments contained therein were made by him in relation to the crash the Space Shuttle in early 2003. Timimi said that he did not actually post the comments on the web-site, someone else did. Upon review of the information contained therein, Timimi confirmed that he had made the statements. Timimi advised that although his statements were "severe", they were not inconsistent with comments made by others about the crash of the space shuttle. Timimi asserts that his main contention, like others who commented on the crash, was that the crash was an omen of things to come. Timimi compared his comments to those made by Samuel Huntington in "The Clash of Civilizations".

Timimi confirmed that he made the statements about Muslims being overjoyed at the adversity that befell their greatest enemy and that the shuttle crash made me feel that Western supremacy that began 500 years ago was coming to a quick end. Timimi considers the current policies utilized by the U.S. administration as a "menace to Muslims and humanity throughout the world". Timimi could not explain the apparent inconsistency in his statement about the problems with the current U.S. policy and his

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comments in the article about 500 years of Western dominance coming to an end. Timimi offered that a solution to the world's problems was to have dialogue about the issues of the day, not to go out and get bayonets and guns.

Timimi was questioned about an article written by Carlyle Murphy for the Washington Post under the title "Muslim Lecturer Fits Easily in Two Worlds, Mosque Leader, GMU Doctoral Candidate May have Promoted Violence", dated 08/08/2003, and particularly with regards to a specific section of this article which contained the following:

[T]imimi declined to be interviewed but responded to written questions via email and through a lawyer's spokesman, Todd Gallinger. His remarks after the shuttle crash, Gallinger said, are apparently a reference to an Internet posting in which a "Sheikh Dr. Ali Al-Tamimi" stated after the crash that "the heart of every believer leaped with joy at the disaster of his greatest enemy." Gallinger said that Timimi does not recall making that statement and that if he did, it was taken out of context. "He definitely did not say in the context of violent conflict," said Gallinger, although Timimi does believe that U.S. foreign policy "victimizes Muslims throughout the world" and that U.S. culture "is taking Muslims away from their religion." Timimi believes that the posting may have been written by someone who overheard a private conversation and mis-quoted him, Gallinger said.

Timimi advised that Gallinger's statements to the reporter were not accurate. Timimi said that he did indeed make the statements contained in the web-posting about the crash of the space shuttle and that these statements were not taken out of context and he was not "mis-quoted".

As for Timimi's interaction with the "Taiba Bulletin", Timimi was aware that Royer established this news service for the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET). Timimi never posted any messages on the Taiba Bulletin. Timimi was aware of the LET's annual conference. Timimi never attended, nor was Timimi ever invited, to the LET conference. Timimi was aware from his reading the Taiba Bulletin that the LET used to blow up bridges and buildings. Timimi was also presented with a print-out from a Yahoo News Group titled

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"Muslim World News". The message on this web-site was posted from "Taiba Bulletin", email address: nadgpk@yahoo.com. Timimi did not recognize this news group and did not recall accessing this news group or receiving mail from this individual.

Timimi advised that in the past he has been placed in positions of trust with the United States government. In 1992, while Timimi was employed by Unisys, he worked on a project with the Department of Transportation (DOT) in which he created a contact database for the Director of the DOT, ANDY CARD. In conjunction with this project, Timimi entered personal information for about 500 or 600 individuals into a database to be used by Card while conducting DOT business. Timimi feels that he was trusted enough that he had access to personal information for a great number of important people, to include cabinet leaders and their children. At the end of the project, Card wrote Timimi a letter of commendation for his work at DOT. Timimi also worked for the U.S. Navy.

Timimi contends that Muslims in the world can be loosely categorized into the following four groups or trends: Modernists, who compromise their beliefs to mimic dominating social culture; Academics, who talk a lot about Islamic education and Islam in the form of intellectual critique; the Political Sector, who deal with political issues related to Islam; and those who are involved with jihad camps and who actually pick up guns and go fight.

Timimi was invited to the dinner meeting at Yong KWON's house (note: referenced in related indictment and during previous interview with Timimi) so that he could provide his opinion on what was going on in light of the events that transpired on 09/11/2001. Timimi advised that at that time, he and others were very concerned about the potential for backlash against Muslims in the United States. The men at KWON's house were extremely agitated and concerned. During this meeting, someone suggested that all of the brothers should gather their families together and stay in one house. The young men were scared that they would be dragged from their homes and thought that they would feel more secure if they all stayed together in one house. The men were expecting something like a fight-out at the "OK Corral". Timimi recalls that he provided advice to those at the meeting in the following generalized manner: first, turn to God and let this pass; second, avoid public places; and third, if you feel pressure, you should leave. Timimi felt that the men were extreme in their predictions of what might happen to them in the United States. Timimi told

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them that he thought the worst that could happen would be internment camps. Timimi thought that these men must have been pre-disposed to training and jihad prior to the dinner gathering that he participated in at KWON's house.

Timimi was read a quote attributed to Randall Royer in an article written by Karen Branch-Brioso and printed in the Saint Louis Post Dispatch on 06/12/2003. Timimi was specifically questioned about the following comments attributed to "Ismail Royer, 30, the former St. Louisan and member of the paintball group who attended al-Timimi's lectures.":

[W]e were all kind of confused about this situation.... So Ali came and said, basically 'The United States is going to declare war on the Muslims, and it's not going to be restricted to any one area.' Ultimately he thought it was going to be like World War III between the United States and the Muslim world...

Timimi responded by saying that Royer was fundamentally wrong in his statement detailed within the newspaper article. Timimi does not believe Royer is intentionally lying, but just wrong. Timimi did not think that World War III or anything analogous to the hour or day of judgement was approaching at the time of the Kwon dinner meeting. Timimi previously lectured on the topic of Signs of the Hour of Judgement. Timimi said that there would be many signs of the end times, signs which were not present shortly after 09/11/2001. There would have had to have been a complete change in the way the world was to see signs of the Armageddon.

Timimi did not encourage, assist, or facilitate the travel of anyone, including those with whom he met at Kwon's house on or about 09/15/2001, to jihad related training camps or battle grounds.

Timimi mentioned that he used to be closer to Nabil GHARBIEH than any other individual identified in the indictment. Timimi suggested that Gharbieh could comment on how Timimi encouraged Gharbieh to go out and travel and see the world.

Timimi advised that after 09/11/2001, he moved to a higher level with regards to his contribution to the Muslim community. Prior to 09/11/2001, Timimi primarily gave talks at the

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Dar al Arqam to a limited number of local individuals. After 09/11/2001, Timimi stopped lecturing at the Dar al Arqam. During the time when lectures at Dar al Arqam were suspended, Timimi held a couple of lectures at his house. Once the Dar al Arqam lectures reconvened, Timimi stopped the lectures at his house. Timimi felt he would be more productive by associating with more influential and international individuals. In that capacity, Timimi traveled to Saudi Arabia to meet with Sheikh SALMAN AL-AUDA. During this visit, Timimi convinced AL-AUDA and other prominent Muslim leaders to draft a letter which was eventually entitled "How We Can Coexist". Timimi claims to have written many of the early drafts of this paper. The paper was eventually signed by about 100 people. Timimi provided a copy of this paper to the USAO/EDVA during a previous meeting. Timimi said that he has never advocated Muslims achieving their goals through violence. Timimi pointed out that the final version of the "How We Can Co-Exist" letter did not condemn USAMA BIN LADEN and left hanging the issue of whether USAMA BIN LADEN was wrong. BIN LADEN later responded to the letter, calling those who signed it "un-Islamic".

Sometime after 09/11/2001, Timimi was approached by Sheikh Safar AL-HAWALI with questions about how he could go about sending a letter to the U.S. President about the upcoming U.S. military action in Afghanistan. Timimi suggested that Hawali hand-deliver the letter to the U.S. Ambassador in Saudi Arabia. Timimi did not have any involvement in the drafting of Hawali's letter regarding Afghanistan. Timimi later assisted Hawali in drafting and delivering a letter to the United States Congress regarding potential United States military action in Iraq.

Timimi said that he is well schooled on theological and philosophical concepts related to Islam. Timimi is not as well educated in areas related to jurisprudence. Timimi typically lectures on topics such as God, angels, and paradise. Timimi is not a cleric and does not have a staff. During Timimi's lectures however, people frequently ask about topics such as jihad which are not completely in line with the topic of his lecture. Timimi prepares for his lectures by writing his lecture notes in short-hand, such as "5156" which refers to a particular verse in the Qur'an. Timimi cannot always prepare for the questions asked by his audience. Typically, Timimi responds to questions asked during the question and answer phase with unprepared or "off-the-cuff" remarks. Timimi has been educated on the theoretical concepts related to jihad. Timimi does not feel however that his education qualifies him to make rulings on the topic.

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Timimi advised that jihad (referring to warfare) is broken down into a communal and a non-communal obligation. In the communal obligation, as long as there are enough people willing and able to fight than an individual obligation does not apply. In the non-communal or individual obligation to participate in jihad, this can only occur in one of three cases. The first case is when the leader of the Muslims calls you up to fight, similar to the draft. The second is a geographical principal and relates to when a country is attacked by an outside force. In this case, it is obligatory for those within the country being attacked to defend themselves. It is also obligatory for Muslims in neighboring countries to assist those in the country being attacked by the oppressor, if those within the country being attacked cannot defend themselves adequately. This obligation continues in concentric circles until enough Muslims can join the fight to fend off the attacker/oppressor. The third situation is when one is on the battlefield and the battle actually comes to you. That is when one finds oneself in a location without war and then without warning finds oneself in a situation where one is in the midst of battle. Timimi said that the third option is unlikely because he could not think of a situation where the aforementioned scenario would logically occur. With regard to all of the above cases, the obligation to fight in jihad does not attach until the actual attack occurs.

During the interview, Timimi wrote some notes on a 5x7 inch sheet of white lined notebook paper. These hand-written notes were provided to the interviewing agents and are submitted separately to the case file in a 1A envelope. Timimi advised that topics related to jihad are commonly discussed in standard Islamic thought. Written beneath a notation for communal obligation, was the following "(necessitates the existence of an Imam over all Muslims)". However, when describing the three scenarios related to the non-communal/individual obligation, Timimi advised that the scenario described under case number one was not likely to occur because at present, there is not considered one legitimate leader of all Muslims who could call one up for obligatory jihad. Timimi was asked whether Mullah Omar, the former leader of the Taliban, was considered a leader of all Muslims. Timimi said that there has not been a legitimate ruler of all Muslims since about the year 1500. Even though many considered Mullah Omar as potentially serving this role, he was not actually the leader.

In relation to the discussion about of whether Mullah Omar represented the leader of all Muslims, Timimi presented and

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read from a two-page typed paper entitled "Shaikh Ali Timimi on the Taliban and the Statues", by "Shaikh Ali Timimi, 7 March 2001". Timimi offered the information provided in this two-page paper as an example of past comments he has made with regard to the Taliban. A copy of this article is submitted separately to the case file, along with the interview notes, in a 1A envelope.

Timimi advised that the rules related to obligatory jihad should not be confused with rules related to whether an individual's participation in jihad is legitimate or permissible. Whether an individual's participation in a communal jihad is permissible or considered legitimate is a theoretical question based on a number of different conditions. Such conditions include whether the individual has obtained permission from his parents, paid off his debts and cared for his family, among others. In that regard, just because a jihad may not be considered "obligatory" based on the rules outlined above, it could still be considered valid, and as such an individual who died on the battlefield would receive the rewards due to a martyr if the necessary conditions were met. Timimi added that "those who die on the battlefield are the best of martyrs". There is no question that warfare is part of the Islamic law and religion. One cannot deny that. Islam is not a pacifist religion. There are conditions however, to whether one's participation in jihad is authentic. What some people do in the name of "jihad" is not authentic.

Based on the above, jihad in regions such as Kashmir and Chenchnya are considered by many to be a legitimate jihad, even though not necessarily obligatory. It was Timimi's opinion that Muslim men from Western Europe and America should not lend their efforts to these fights and instead should focus on obtaining their education. In that under the rules of the communal obligation, as long as there are enough people willing and able to carry out the fight, than others should assist in other ways and should pursue areas that serve the community best, such as getting their education. Timimi advocated dialogue and collective organization among Muslims in an effort to achieve their goals.

Timimi is not a "jihadi". Timimi has never participated in Jihad related combat or training himself. Timimi has never encouraged others to do the same. During the mid-1980's, many of Timimi's peers were going off to fight in Afghanistan against the Russians. There was as draw for young able-bodied men to go and fight. Timimi however, decided to focus on his studies. There is a similar jihadist environ out there today in cyberspace. Timimi

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is not connected such jihadist topics and instead continues to remain focused on academic and intellectual issues.

Timimi was asked whether he recognized statements made during a lecture entitled ROLE OF MUSLIM STUDENTS IN NORTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES. The statements read to Timimi related to communal and non-communal obligatory jihad, when it is required to remove dis-believers from attacked lands, and specifically related to an individual who used to be a General in an army and therefore was in possession of military skills. Timimi recalled giving such a lecture, and advised that the statements read sounded like things he would have said in response to questions asked by the audience on the topic of jihad.

Timimi advised that he did not know that Kwon and Hasan were planning to attend a training camp run by the LET when they left the United States shortly after 09/11/2001. Timimi met with Yong KWON and Mahmood HASAN a couple of days after the dinner meeting at KWON's house. They told Timimi that they were leaving the United States for hijrah. The topic of jihad was never discussed or implied by Kwon and Hasan. However, Timimi felt compelled to caution Kwon and Hasan that they should not make it their intention to fight in jihad and to limit their intentions to hijrah. Timimi explained that even though the topic of jihad was never mentioned, other than Timimi's cautionary statement, "the war drums were beating" and "things were spinning out of control". It was clear from the press reports that the "US was moving into war". Following this meeting, Timimi became even more concerned about Kwon's and Hasan's intentions and actually asked someone else to call them to try and convince them not to travel at all. Timimi would not provide the name of this individual, advising that he and his attorneys are working with the individual and trying to encourage him to write a statement.

Timimi is currently pursuing his PHD at George Mason University (GMU). In connection with these studies, Timimi works on a state of Virginia sponsored research project related to the causes of breast cancer. The building at which Timimi works houses a number of administrative offices related his and other research projects. Housed within the same building, are the offices of the head of a Bio-Defense project. Timimi frequently talks to this individual about questions related to scientific research. The actual research for the Bio-Defense project is conducted at a separate building. Timimi does not have access to that building. The building at which Timimi works is of an administrative nature

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and is not set up with the types of ventilation and other safety measures contained within the other building. Timimi does not have any interaction with scientific research of a sensitive nature.

Timimi provided the following additional comments with regards to his relationships with some of the individuals charged in a related indictment:

Ismail Royer - Timimi knew him to be a spokesperson for the COUNCIL ON AMERICAN ISLAMIC RELATIONS (CAIR).

Ibrahim Hamdi - Rumors were prevalent about Hamdi's travel overseas and attendance at a training camp. Timimi does not have any first-hand knowledge of Hamdi's intentions to go and train or fight overseas. Likewise, Hamdi never discussed details of his intentions or activities overseas, other than one reference that Hamdi made to Timimi while they were discussing Hamdi's divorce. Hamdi told Timimi that the divorce he was going through was more difficult than an activity that he engaged in (Timimi could not recall what activity) at the camp. Timimi did not ask follow-up questions to determine exactly what Hamdi meant by this comment, but assumes that Hamdi was referring to a military training camp. Hamdi was careful not to disclose the specifics of his trip.

Sabri Benkahla - Timimi does not have any knowledge of Benkahla's travel to any sort of a jihad or military training camp. All Timimi knew about Benkahla is that he was studying at the Islamic University of Medina.

Yong Kwon- Timimi was not even aware of Kwon's last name before the search of his residence in February 2003. Timimi recalls that Kwon asked him to witness his will prior to going to Saudi Arabia for hajj.

Saif Chapman - Timimi met Chapman many years ago at a time when Chapman was a security guard at the Saudi School. Timimi had been out of contact with Chapman for many years. Timimi never discussed overseas military or jihad training and/or the LET.

Timimi was not personally aware of the paint-ball activities being carried out by many of his students from Dar al Arqam. Timimi has recently heard from others he has talked to about this case, that he and other directors from the Dar al Arqam met about the paint-ball activities and thereafter encouraged those

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participating in the activities to stop. Timimi does not specifically recall this happening.

Timimi has long been friends with an individual named SOLIMAN AL-BOTHI. Al-Bothi is not an Islamic scholar. Al-Bothi used to work with Salman AL-AUDA on his web-site. This is the same web-site that YUSEF ESTES used to operate in the United States. Al-Bothi used to work for the AL-HARAMAIN office in Saudi Arabia. Al-Bothi resigned from this position a long time ago. Timimi introduced Mahmood Hasan to Al-Bothi. HASAN assisted Al-Bothi with the pre-launch work for Al-Bothi's English language web-site. Timimi learned that Hasan was not qualified to run the web-site once it was up and running and found a job teaching in Saudi Arabia instead.

Timimi has met with Stanley Cohen about his legal situation. Timimi has not visited any of the defendants in jail.

Timimi does not know an individual named IBRAHIM BUISIR in Ireland.

Timimi knows an individual named ABU MUNTASIR, with JIMAS in the United Kingdom. Timimi advised that ABU MUNTASIR is Timimi's "best defense". Timimi offered to talk more about ABU MUNTASIR during the next interview.